

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Town of Natick, Massachusetts

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING CERTIFICATION

Under the Historic District By-Law and the rules adopted by the Town of Natick Historic District Commission, certification by the Commission is required before work is begun that will affect grounds or the exterior of buildings within the District that are visible from a public way. Work that requires prior certification includes any alteration to the exterior of a structure, including any work involving signs, walls and fences, terraces, walks, driveways, etc. Certification is not required for work done inside a building that does not affect its exterior, or for work on grounds and the exterior of buildings that will not be visible to the public as defined in Chapter 40C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Certification is also not required for the following:

1. Temporary structures or signs, subject, however to such conditions as to duration of use, location of lighting, removal and similar matters as the Commission may reasonably specify.
2. Storm doors, storm windows and screens.
3. The color of paint.

Types of Certification

There are three types of certificates issued by the Commission:

1. Certificate of Appropriateness. This certifies that the proposed work is appropriate with regard to the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics of the District. The majority of applications received by the Commission will be for this type.
2. Certificate of Non-applicability. This certificate is issued when the proposed work does not require certification. It is issued when an application for Certificate of Appropriateness has been received for work which in fact does not require certification, and also when an applicant requests such certification to remove any doubt regarding whether or not proposed work lies within the jurisdiction of the Commission.
3. Certificate of Hardship. This is issued when the Commission determines that substantial hardship would be involved unless the proposed work is certified and that the proposed work, while not certifiable as “appropriate”, would not result in substantial detriment to the public welfare and would not result in substantial derogation from the intent of the Massachusetts Historic District Act and the Natick Historic District By-Law.

Applications for Certification

Application forms may be obtained from the Office of the Town Clerk. Completed applications should be mailed to the Town of Natick Historic District Commission, c/o Town Clerk, 13 East Central Street, Natick, MA 01760, or delivered to the Office of the Town Clerk.

The Commission requires a reasonably complete description of the proposed work on applications for certification. The existing elevations and photographs of exterior should be included as well as a description of specific details regarding type and color of materials (except color of paint) to be used. Details regarding trim, gutters and leaders, windows and sashes, doors and door frames, roof pitch, and the material and elevations of fences and walls, and of walks, terraces, driveways and parking lots. If lighting is proposed, the fixtures should be described. In cases of new construction and relocation, copies of architectural sketches, plans and specifications are required. In the case of demolition, the applicant must indicate how restoration of the grounds will be accomplished.

*The Commission encourages each applicant to review their application with the Chairperson to discuss the specific materials and requirements necessary to ensure an application is complete before submitting it to the Town Clerk. **The Commission may return an application to the applicant if the information supplied is insufficient. In such cases the official date of receipt shall be that of receipt of an acceptable application.***

All materials submitted with the applications must be retained by the Commission for its files.

Advance Inquiries

The Commission welcomes advance inquiries as to the applicability of the Massachusetts Historic District Act and the Town By-Law to any project or other matter potentially subject to the Commission's review. Inquiries may be addressed in writing to the Commission, or made in person at any of its meetings. The Town Clerk is notified of the Commission's meetings in advance and any person may appear and be heard on any matter pending before the Commission prior to its reaching a decision.

The above general information is intended to provide a brief summary of the procedures regarding certification by the Town of Natick Historic District Commission. For detailed information on the Commission and the rules and law governing its work, the following should be consulted: Town of Rules and Regulations of the Commission, the Natick Historic District By-Law, and Chapter 40C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as amended.